
HEALTH DEPARTMENT
NEWS RELEASE



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For additional information contact:
Lisa LaPlante at (616) 632-7182 or Lisa.LaPlante@kentcountymi.gov

Kent County Continues to Rank in Top 20 in Michigan in Annual Health Rankings

GRAND RAPIDS – Kent County ranks 16th out of 82 counties measured in Michigan in the national **County Health Rankings**. The report was released today by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Kent County is the most populous county to achieve a top 20 ranking in Michigan. The ranking is an improvement over 2010, the first year of the report, when we ranked 22nd.

Kent County attained 16th in *Health Outcomes*, which measures how long people live, how healthy people feel, and mental well-being. Our overall Health Factors score improved from 19th in 2012, to 15th in 2013. “The data indicate a slight decrease in the percentage of smokers, an increase in people receiving diabetes screenings and mammograms, fewer violent crimes, and lower unemployment,” noted Adam London, the acting Health Officer for the Kent County Health Department.

Overall, the scores are very positive for Kent County. There are, however, several areas where there is a need for improvement. “Kent County did see Morbidity and Mortality scores drop this year, because Kent County residents reported more days where they felt physically or mentally unhealthy,” London said. He also recommended KCHD and other health care providers continue efforts to make sure women are receiving good prenatal education, nutrition, and care, to ensure more full-term, healthy babies are being born here.

The study also found the following issues of concern:

- 20% of children in Kent County live in poverty, compared to 14% nationally;
- 51% of Kent County restaurants are ‘fast food establishments’ compared to a national benchmark of 27%;
- 18% of Kent County adults admit to heavy or excessive drinking, compared to 7% nationally;
- 10 recreational activity centers exist per 100,000 residents, compared to 16 facilities per 100,000 residents nationally;
- 5% of residents with low income do not live close to a grocery store, compared to the national figure of 1%;
- Kent County had a daily average of 10.6 parts per million (ppm) of fine particulate matter in the air, higher than the national average of 8.8 ppm.

The annual rankings help health care providers better understand the health problems in our communities. For more information, go to www.countyhealthrankings.org.

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KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 260 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and four satellite clinics located in Wyoming, Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit www.accesskent.com/health.

700 FULLER AVE. NE, GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49503